



# Inside Congress

*by United States Representative George R. Nethercutt, Jr.*

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**For the week ending March 22, 2002**

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Welcome to this week's edition of Inside Congress. I am glad to share with you a little of my work in the national legislature. Please follow the listed links or contact my office for more information on the topics mentioned here.

## **BOEING DISCUSSES FUTURE OF SPOKANE PLANT**

I met with Boeing representatives on Wednesday afternoon in Washington, D.C. to discuss the future of Boeing's Spokane facilities. I am heartened that Boeing, rather than walking away from the plant, is considering the option of selling the plant, either to the employees or to a stable company, and then guaranteeing a long-term contract of work.

The criteria for selling the plant that Boeing outlined to me were: 1. Keeping the workers in Spokane. 2. The buyer must have the resources to grow the company. 3. Keeping a good faith relationship between Boeing and the union. 4. Boeing will guarantee work at the facility for the foreseeable future. If those terms are acceptable to the employees and the community, then they will be acceptable to me.

While I understand Boeing's desire to not make a calendar-driven decision, I believe Boeing needs to move forward as quickly as possible to relieve the anxiety of the workers over their future. Five hundred families are waiting on pins and needles for a final decision. Boeing should resolve the fate of the plant as soon as possible, and with a solution that is beneficial to the employees.

## **PULLMAN-MOSCOW, DEER PARK AIRPORTS GET \$1 MILLION FOR UPGRADES**

Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport will receive \$1.14 million to construct a new parking lot, compensate for security enhancements, acquire new taxiway lighting and friction measuring equipment, and to rehabilitate a taxiway. A new parking lot is needed at the airport because the existing parking lot does not meet a post-September 11 security requirement that vehicles be parked 300 feet away from the terminal. The current parking lot is only usable if the airport chooses to hire individuals to search all vehicles prior to parking. The parking restriction is hurting small airports, and is a good example of why one-size-fits-all policies

made in Washington, D.C. rarely work best. I had discussed this issue directly with White House officials and FAA Administrator Jane Garvey.

In addition, the City of Deer Park will receive \$150,000 for snow removal equipment to keep the Deer Park airfield clear during inclement weather. The funding is comes from the FAA's Airport Improvement Program.

### **CUBA WORKING GROUP WILL ADVOCATE FOR INCREASED U.S. EXPORTS**

This week I was joined by a diverse, bipartisan group of my House colleagues to announce the formation of the Cuba Working Group. The CWG is a bipartisan group interested in changing U.S. policy toward Cuba. Specifically, the CWG is focused on four areas: lifting the ban on travel to Cuba, advancing democracy on the island, permitting private financing for agricultural sales to Cuba, and promoting cooperation on drug interdiction. Thanks to many years of work and changes in the law, Cuba recently agreed to purchase about \$4 million in Washington state apples and peas. I believe this is just the beginning. If we can open the door to trade wider, it's estimated the United States could realize \$1 billion in sales of agricultural products to Cuba. I will continue to work toward increased trade for the benefit of Washington's ag producers and the economies of Washington state communities.

### **LEGISLATION**

This week I became a cosponsor of **H.Con.Res.350** introduced by Rep. Brian Kerns of Indiana to express the sense of Congress that amnesty should not be granted to individuals who are in the United States, or its territories, illegally.

I also became a cosponsor of **H.Con.Res.365** introduced by Rep. Jennifer Dunn of Washington, to recognize the 30th anniversary of the historic visit of President Nixon to China, the purchase that year of Boeing aircraft by China, the Feb. 2002 visit by President Bush, and the opportunities for future political, cultural and economic ties with China and the U.S.

In addition, I became a cosponsor of **H.R. 4027, the Methamphetamine Protective Equipment and Training Partnership Grant Act of 2002**. This legislation will fund a matching grant program to provide training and equipment to protect law enforcement when busting methamphetamine labs. The bill would provide 50 percent matching funds to rural communities smaller than 100,000 people for law enforcement training.

## **ON THE FLOOR**

**H.Res. 368** -- Commending the Pentagon Renovation Program on its swift work to repair the Department of Defense building attacked on Sept. 11. The bill passed 413-0. I voted yes.

**H.R. 3986** -- This legislation extends the availability of Disaster Unemployment Assistance from 26 to 39 weeks under the Stafford Act for victims of the Sept. 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks. The bill passed by voice vote. I voted yes.

**H.R. 3924 -- Freedom to Telecommute Act of 2002.** This bill prohibits the government from discriminating against contractors who utilize telecommuting. Telecommuting promotes productivity, a high quality of life for workers, and reduces traffic. The government should not discriminate against companies able to adapt to work needs in the 21st century. The bill passed 421-0. I voted yes.

**H.Con.Res. 353 - Budget Resolution for Fiscal Year 2003.** The House passed a budget this week that focuses on three spending priorities:

- **Security for the Nation.** This plan supports the President's request for winning the war against terrorism overseas and enhancing the safety of America's homeland. In addition, it promotes scientific research that can speed the discovery of technologies capable of improving the lives of all Americans.
- **Security of a Growing Economy.** The budget returns to the practice of paying down debt, further easing the burden of Government on the economy. It maintains the tax reductions enacted last year, and provides for an additional \$66 billion of tax relief in over the next 5 years – principally through measures to help workers and working families. It further contributes to the economy through investments in agriculture, energy, and the environment.
- **Security for Ourselves and Our Families' Future.** Because America is a community of individuals, the budget helps Americans in pursuing their own destinies – by supporting education, health care, and retirement security.

The bill passed 221-209. I voted yes.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

I always enjoy hearing from you. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of assistance to you in any matter. Here are some of the ways you may reach me, especially if you know of others who may want to receive this report each week:

**Spokane Office**

920 W. Riverside, Suite 594  
Spokane, WA 99201  
509-353-2374  
Fax: 509-353-2412

**Spokane Valley Office**

9209 E. Mission Avenue, Suite B  
Spokane, WA 99206  
509-924-7775  
Fax: 509-924-7671

**Colville Office**

555 S. Main Street  
Colville, WA 99114  
509-684-3481  
Fax: 509-684-3482

**Walla Walla Office**

29 S. Palouse Street  
Walla Walla, WA 99362  
509-529-9358  
Fax: 509-529-9379

**Washington, D.C. Office**

223 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
202-224-2006  
Fax: 202-225-3392

**Website**

[www.house.gov/nethercutt](http://www.house.gov/nethercutt)

**Electronic Mail**

[www.house.gov/nethercutt/contact](http://www.house.gov/nethercutt/contact)